

THE DRY LAW

History of the Fight for Prohibition.

(The following statement has the approval of the Dry Organizations of the state):

The Nebraska legislature has adjourned, and the impression has been left on the state that we never had a better house of representatives or a worse senate. In the last days the senate passed the Dry Bill, Women's Suffrage and a Bill for a Constitutional Convention. This is all that saves the senate from universal contempt.

Vote on Dry Bill.

The dry bill passed the house by a vote of 84 to 4, and the senate by 30 to 3. Many of the wet senators voted dry and offered explanations of their votes. Nearly all of these explanations bear internal evidence of having been drawn by one person, a lawyer, who understood the measure better than these men could have. These explanations took the position that House Roll 793, the dry bill, as it passed the house, was defective and unworkable, and these senators wanted the people to understand that they had been holding out because they wanted to make a better bill out of it.

The fact is that these men were wet and worked and voted for a wet bill. Eighteen senators entered into a secret wet caucus and they were pledged by three separate roll calls to stand by the wet program, which included near-beer, the unlimited possession of liquor and the lax enforcement of the dry law.

The Wet Senators.

The men who entered this caucus were Mattes, Gates, Tanner, Moriarity, Bennett, Strehlow, Wilson of Dodge, Soost, Kohl, Henry, Doty, Lubner, Spirk, Buhman, Samuelson, Robertson, Wilson of Frontier, Adams. Albert was identified with the wets in some of their proceedings, but did not attend the caucus.

Ten of them represented dry districts: Gates, Wilson of Dodge, Wilson of Frontier, Soost, Albert, Lubner, Buhman, Samuelson, Robertson, Adams.

Ten of these men pledged themselves to the people of their districts during their campaign that if they were elected, and if the amendment carried, they would favor legislation to make the amendment effective. Gates, Soost, Albert, Doty, Lubner, Spirk, Buhman, Samuelson, Robertson, Adams. The action of these men constituted a violation of their pledges to their constituents. They did all in their power to destroy the vital provisions of the house bill. The fact that they voted dry on final roll call does not represent their real position. A law could not have been passed without them, or some of them, yet their actions indicated all along that they were wet. They did not yield their fight until public opinion and political necessity drove them to it.

Organization of the Senate.

Every act of this legislature has revolved around near-beer. That has been the paramount issue every day, and its influence has extended to all legislation. The senate organized by electing John Mattes, a brewer, president pro tem. All of the wet senators on the democratic side voted for Mattes. Later a sifting committee and a conference committee on the dry bill were selected, the purpose of which was to allow the brewers to manufacture near-beer and maintain near-beer saloons. Mattes was chosen chairman of both committees, and the personnel of these committees was popping wet.

The Case of Near-Beer.

Near-beer is a cloak for the bootlegger. It keeps the brewer and the near-beer saloon in business, controlling our politics as before. If they can make near-beer they can make something stronger that looks like near-beer and get it into near-beer bottles with near-beer labels. History discloses that near-beer has dispensed real beer and everything else. Near-beer saloons would have brought the law into disrepute and prepared the way for submission in 1920. It would have been worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to the brewers to remain in the business of making near-beer.

The Lower House.

The house was at all times consistently dry. It elected a dry speaker, the organization was dry, and a very strong committee was placed in charge of the preparation of the prohibition bill, Norton, Thomas, Flansburg, Waite and Hostetter. To the labors of this committee, aided by the senate dry committee, consisting of Seal, Chappell, Howell, Sandell, Sawyer and Neal, is due House Roll 793, which is a magnificent piece of legislation.

The wet senators have tried to give out the impression that this bill was defective, but as originally passed it was acceptable to the dry forces and was very objectionable to the wet senators. It was a bone dry law. Only after the right of the possession of liquors were conceded, were the wet senators willing to vote for it.

The Bill in the Senate.

When the bill went to the senate, Senator Robinson introduced 90 amendments which, if adopted, would have had the effect, 1st, to allow malt liquor of low alcoholic content to

be manufactured and sold; 2nd, to allow unlimited possession of intoxicating liquors in any place; 3rd, to allow saloons 30 days to sell out their stock of liquors; 4th, to allow the distilleries to keep and sell liquors in bonded warehouses; 5th, to permit liquor advertising; 6th, to destroy the rights of county attorneys to collect evidence by inquiry proceedings and otherwise; 7th, to allow anybody to ship liquor into the state for medicinal purposes; 8th, to loosen up the shipping sections; 9th, to take away the rights of private citizens to prosecute, bring injunctions and hire private counsel in communities where officials prove inactive; 10th, to limit search and seizure of premises to freeholders; to require the giving of injunction bonds and to render the enforcement of laws against bootleggers much more difficult than it would have been under the house bill.

Every one of the eighteen wet senators voted for all of these amendments except Albert. He voted for some and against some. These amendments would have made prohibition a joke in Nebraska, so much so that the house determined to stand firm and adjourn without a new law rather than accept them. The house figured that it would be better to operate under the Stocumb law for two years than to pass a law crippled by the senate amendments. It was well understood by the wet senators that the Stocumb law prohibited near-beer and the retention of that law would defeat their purposes.

The Conference Committee.

The house appointed those stalwart champions of the dry cause, Norton, Thomas and Flansburg. The senate appointed those equally stalwart champions of booze, Mattes and Moriarity. The wet caucus had induced Robertson to violate his pledges, and they gave him a place on the conference committee. Pressure from home had been terrific upon him and he was now ready to get an agreement. He held out for ten days in the interests of near-beer, but finally signed the report prepared by the house members of the committee. This report permits the use of liquor in the home; without this concession no law would have been passed. The house conferees made no other essential concession to the wets although they did yield in many amendments of minor consequence.

This possession clause provides that any person may have liquor in his home, providing he lays it in before May 1st. If there is such evidence against any person as causes the filing of a case against him for law violation, the possession of liquor is prima facie evidence that he had it for unlawful purposes. After May 1st liquor cannot be bought, sold, imported or shipped for any purpose except to certain specified classes.

The majority report was adopted by the house by a vote of 84 to 4, Jelen, Snyder, Segelke and Meisenberg voting "no."

The Governor's Message.

The house conferees stood as a unit and the house stood behind them like a stone wall. When the conference report was presented to the house, and it being apparent that the wet senators would not yield, the house was prepared to adjourn without a law.

At this juncture the governor sent a message to the legislature urging the committee to continue in conference, and he told them that he would call them back in extra session if they failed to pass a law.

The house still stood firm, and it became necessary for the hard-dying wets to yield their position, which they did. They waived the whole near-beer non-enforcement program.

Mattes and Moriarity submitted a minority report, but it was too late. Wet senators had gone to caucus and demanded that they be released from their pledges. Pressure from home had become irresistible. The minority report got only seven votes. The majority, or dry report, was now voted upon and it received the votes of thirty senators, only Mattes, Moriarity and Strehlow going down with the wet ship.

This long drawn-out fight discloses the power of the people, the pulpit and the press. The power of public opinion was illustrated in a way that nothing has done in a long time. First requests began to come in to house members to vote for House Roll 793, then the senators began to hear from home, and after the senate went on record favoring the wet amendments, a storm of angry protests expressed in language more forcible than polite came up to the senate from all over the state. Recrudescent senators were reminded of solemn pledges which they had made to the people and broken, and demands were made that senators resign. The pressure could no longer be withstood, and the senators backed up.

It is not likely that the wet senators have fooled the people back home or that the present senate will soon be forgotten. Nebraska needs a house cleaning in its upper legislative body. New men are coming forward to contest the seats of the wet senators, and it is expected that men of known dry and progressive antecedents will go before the primaries next year in both parties. The dry people of Nebraska may be assured that the law as finally passed is one of the best in the Union and that it can and will be enforced.

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PROCLAMATION!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES having declared that the supreme test of our nation has come, and having asked for the earnest support of our people in the prosecution of the war which is now our war, I deem it my duty to caution all citizens against the waste of food, and to advise that the utmost economy be exercised in the consumption of products of wheat, and of all other food-stuffs.



The gravity of the situation, which makes imperative a rigid husbanding of the world's food supply, is set forth in the following plea of Herbert C. Hoover, Chairman of the American Commission for Relief in Belgium, and recently appointed head of the American Food Board:

"Our Allies cannot fight without food. Our enemies are calculating that America will fail to supply them, and that they will need to give in.

"The total stock of food today available in the Allied world is not sufficient to last until September, if America continues its present rate of consumption. We are now face to face with the result of last year's poor harvest, the diversion of man-power from agriculture all over the world, the unavailing efforts of the European women to plant available fields only, the isolation of Russia, the sinking of food ships, and many other causes.

"England, France, and Italy are reducing consumption by drastic steps, but even with all this reduction they must have from us during the next three months more than twice as much food as we should have exported normally or than we can send if we consume as usual. The only hope of providing the deficiency is by the elimination of waste and actual and rigorous self-sacrifice on the part of the American people."

Thus, by the exercise of patriotic self-restraint and a judicious selection of only the most plentiful foods for use, every American man, woman and child can do his or her bit to aid America and its Allies in this hour of need.

We are a nation of 102,860,000 persons, of twenty million families. If each family will reduce its consumption of food by but a pound a week there can be added to the food supply of Europe ten thousand tons of foodstuffs a week, or over one half million tons a year.

Such a saving represents but a small part of that which may easily be made by the American people, and which it will be necessary for them to make in order to bring the war to an early and successful conclusion.

Not only must the most rigid economy in the consumption of foodstuffs be practiced, but an enormous increase in their production must be made as well.

Therefore, I deem it my further duty to advise the citizens of this community to make extraordinary efforts to increase the cultivation of foodstuffs, and for this purpose to utilize all labor that can be spared from other occupations, and all cultivatable land that is now idle. The labor and ground ordinarily given up to ornamental cultivation may well be dedicated for the time being to this patriotic and humane purpose.

Let it not be said that in the adoption of wise and patriotic measures for the successful prosecution of the great struggle for the world's liberty upon which our nation has entered this community has not done its full part.

CAL E. COX, Sheriff.

Crow Elk-hart

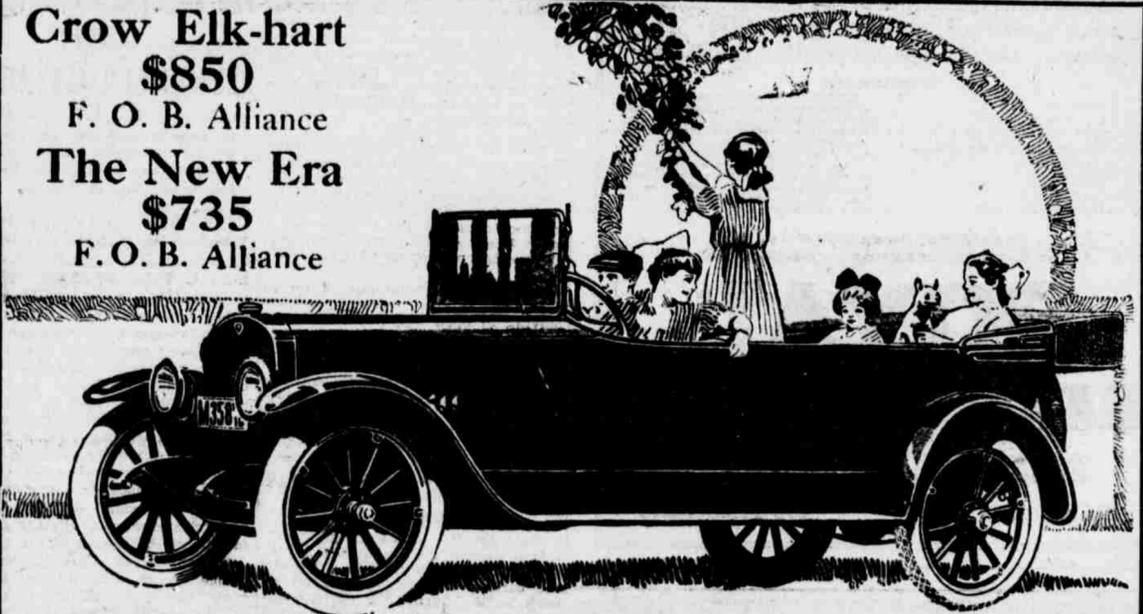
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